DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 469 790 CE 082 162

AUTHOR	Medel-Anonuevo, Carolyn; Ohsako, Toshio; Mauch, Werner
TITLE	Revisiting Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century.
INSTITUTION	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Hamburg (Germany). Inst. for Education.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	34p.; Edited by Victoria L. Tinio.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/pdf/revisitingLLL.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Students; Citizenship Education; Cross Cultural Training; Cultural Exchange; Cultural Interrelationships; *Cultural Pluralism; Definitions; Educational Environment; *Educational Objectives; *Educational Principles; Experiential Learning; Foreign Countries; Humanistic Education; Individual Differences; *Intergroup Education; Learning Motivation; Learning Processes; *Lifelong Learning; Position Papers; *Role of Education; Second Language Instruction; Self Actualization; Social Change; Student Characteristics

ABSTRACT

Although lifelong learning is being increasingly cited as one of the key principles in the fields of education and development, shared understanding of the term's usage at the global level is lacking. Lifelong learning is closely tied to the challenge of openness and the changes with which modern individuals must cope in their lifetimes. Lifelong learning encompasses both continuity (stability) and discontinuity (change) in learned capacities over time as a result of interactions with the manmade environment--in other words, culture. The following strategies may help facilitate lifelong learning, effective cultural exchange, and interactions: (1) starting from the formative years, expose learners to diverse cultural information and experiences; (2) combine foreign language learning programs with culture learning; (3) develop culture learning programs with culture relativity as a main theme; and (4) develop learning indicators for individual learners' cross-cultural competencies. Lifelong learning should appeal to the totality of a person--heart, body, and brain--and more importantly, to our existential values and emotions. Lifelong learning can also deal with the uncertainty and contradictions of life. Lifelong learning should aim to promote the art of human maturity, which is a prerequisite for becoming a good citizen who is actively involved in local, national, and international issues and problems. (Contains 21 references.) (MN)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 469 790

revisiting lifelong learning for the 21st century

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C. McIntosh

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

CE082162

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Revisiting Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century

Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo,
Toshio Ohsako
and Werner Mauch

UNESCO Institute for Education

The UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, is a legally independent entity. While the Institute's programmes are established along the lines laid down by the General Conference of UNESCO, the publications of the Institute are issued under its sole responsibility; UNESCO is not responsible for their contents.

The points of view, selection of facts, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily coincide with official positions of the UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the UNESCO Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country or territory, or its authorities, or concerning the delimitations of the frontiers of any country or territory.

© UNESCO Institute for Education, 2001

Produced and printed in the Philippines.
Edited by Victoria L. Tinio
Cover page design by Ms Joanne de Leon
Layout by Sadidaya Disenyo
Printed by Art Angel Printshop

UNESCO Institute for Education
Feldbrunnenstr. 58 • 20148 Hamburg, Germany
Tel.: (+49 40) 44 80 41-0 • Fax: (+49 40) 410 77 23
www.unesco.org/education/uie • uie@unesco.org

Foreword

The philosophy of learning throughout life is anything but modern. Ancient societies all over the world have emphasized the need to learn from the cradle to the grave. Today in the 21st century, we find ourselves anew amidst the loud voices proclaiming the importance of lifelong learning. What is clear is that the context of lifelong learning has changed and the utopian and generous vision hitherto characterizing lifelong learning has now become a necessary guiding and organizing principle of education reforms. It is recognized today as an indispensable tool to enable education to face its multiple current and emerging challenges.

As information and communication technologies (ICTs) permeate our societies and communities, the role of the individual learner is highlighted. Globalization has produced outcomes and processes which make the learning of new skills and competencies of paramount importance. Today it is no longer enough to have the same living and working skills one had five years ago. Learning to learn, problem solving, critical understanding and anticipatory learning — these are only a few of the core skills and competencies needed for all, at a time when 60% of trades and jobs to be performed in the next two decades or so are not yet known. In many communities, the growing number of migrants means that residents have to discover new ways of relating to people from other cultures. The clamour for active citizenship likewise implies that individuals should realize their capacity for active participation in the shaping of democratic societies. And in all of the above, the environment in which learning takes place is decisive for all learners, women and men, young and old.

As the debate on lifelong learning resonates throughout the world, it is clear that there needs to be more discussion on how this concept

will be put into practice. The rhetoric on lifelong learning has to be matched with evidence of how it works and how it will contribute to creating more humane societies. This booklet, *Revisiting Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century* is UIE's contribution to this discussion.

The Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) in 1997 and the Dakar World Education Forum (WEF) in 2000 were two of the most recent conferences co-organized by UNESCO where the importance of lifelong learning was affirmed. We hope that this booklet will be used widely to push forward the CONFINTEA V and WEF agenda within the lifelong learning framework. It is our confident expectation that the growing demand for learning and the new paradigm shift encapsulated in CONFINTEA V will filter down to education systems of many kinds worldwide, thus affirming the triumph of learning as an essential tool, a right and a joy.

Adama Ouane
Director, UNESCO Institute for Education

We propose lifelong education as the master concept for educational policies in the years to come for both developed and developing countries.

– Faure Report, 1972

A key to the twenty-first century, learning throughout life will be essential, for adapting to the evolving requirements of the labour market and for better mastery of the changing time-frames and rhythms of individual existence.

– Delors Report, 1996

Revisiting Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century

Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo, Toshio Ohsako
and Werner Mauch

While lifelong learning has increasingly been cited as one of the key principles in the educational and development fields, there is no shared understanding of its usage at the global level. The diversity of discourses on this concept has been shaped by historical and geographical factors, and at certain historical moments, one interpretation gains hegemony.

In the beginning of the 21st century, we find ourselves in the midst of the loud voices of the European Union (EU) and its member states, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and even the World Bank as they advocate the need to learn throughout life. Given their ideological, political and economic dominance vis-a-vis the rest of the world, it is not surprising that they are gaining adherents in other regions of the world. Many Asian countries, for example, have followed this line of thinking and have developed modern policy discourses on lifelong learning, transforming in the process their own traditional philosophies (e.g., Confucianism, Buddhism) which have for centuries promoted continuous learning. The predominantly economic interpretation of lifelong learning in the last ten years, however, has become problematic for many educators and practitioners who have come forward with such terms as "Lifelong (L)Earning" and "Learning to Earn" as their succinct criticism of the way the term is being promoted.

In fact, this present situation is a continuation of the OECD lifelong learning discourse made public in its report, Recurrent Education: A Strategy for Lifelong Learning (1973), which reframed the lifelong learning discussion in largely economistic and employability terms. Gelpi (1980) points out that "in the industrialized countries, at the time of the economic boom of the 1960's, the ideology of 'lifelong

education=general education' reflected in effect the necessity for the rapid training of workers at average and higher levels in the vocational field."

In the past though a more holistic interpretation of lifelong learning had been promoted. For example. the Faure Report: Learning to Be (1972), which sought to institutionalize the concept of lifelong education, advocated for the right and necessity of each individual to learn for his/her social, economic, political and cultural development. While acknowledging the existence of lifelong education practices in diverse cultures all over the world, the report emphasized that lifelong education needs to be enshrined as the basic concept in educational policies. In this report, some key ideas on lifelong education were forwarded:

> Every individual must be in a position to keep learning throughout his life. The idea of lifelong education is the keystone of the learning society. The lifelong concept covers all aspects of education, embracing everything in it, with the whole being more than the sum of its parts. There is no such thing as a separate "permanent" part of education which is not lifelong. In other words, lifelong education is not an educational system but the principle in which the over-all organization of a system is founded, and which accordingly underlies the development of each of its component parts (pp.181-82).

In response to the call for clarification and operationalization of this master concept, the Governing Board of the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) approved in 1972 the thrust of the Institute on research on lifelong education. This resulted in several publications, from the so-called classic of lifelong education, *Foundations of Lifelong Education* by R.H. Dave (1976) to a series on studies in lifelong education.

Lifelong education covers "formal, non-formal and informal patterns of learning throughout the life cycle of an individual for the conscious and continuous enhancement of the quality of life, his own and that of society" (Dave, 1976). While all these kinds of learning were taking place even before Faure, et al wrote their report, it was an attempt to introduce lifelong education "as a norm for educational prac-

tice at national level and for the whole range of age groups and educational services" (Carelli in Dave, p. 10). This meant a perspective that treats education in its totality as it encompassed and unified all stages and forms of education. As the precursor of lifelong learning, lifelong education was conceived as a holistic and integrated strategy that was directed toward the "fulfillment of adaptive and creative functions of the individuals leading to the continuous improvement of the quality of personal and collective life" (UIE, 1976).

Kirpal (Dave, 1976) identifies the three main directions of change and emphasis of lifelong education as expansion, innovation and integration. *Expansion* refers to the fact that lifelong education encompasses the learning process in time, both in the range and content of learning and in the multiplication of learning situations, and in so doing creates new motivations and offers all kinds of opportunities. *Innovation* refers to the creation of alternative structures and patterns of learning in response to multiple and diverse learning opportunities. Finally, *integration* facilitates the process of expansion and the introduction of innovation through adequate organization and meaningful linkages.

Even at that early stage of its conceptual development and subsequent operationalization, it was recognized that "it is often difficult to conceptualize lifelong education in its entirety on account of its comprehensiveness and multiple modalities"(Dave,1976, p.35). As a result, researchers have focused on different aspects depending on their interests and background.

Twenty-eight years after the Faure Report, lifelong education has been replaced by lifelong learning. In 1996, UNESCO's Delors Report acknowledged the need to "rethink and update the concept of lifelong education so as to reconcile three forces: competition, which provides incentives; co-operation which gives strength; and solidarity, which unites" (p. 18). It further contended that:

> There is a need to rethink and broaden the notion of lifelong education. Not only must it adapt to changes in the nature of work, but it must also constitute a continuous process of forming whole beings—their knowledge and aptitudes, as well as the criti-

cal faculty and ability to act. It should enable people to develop awareness of themselves and their environment and encourage them to play their social role and work in the community (p. 21).

It is in this context that the Commission discussed the need to advance towards a "learning society". The truth is that every aspect of life, at both the individual and the social level, offers opportunities for both learning and doing (p. 21).

A preliminary examination of documents and publications, however, shows that the shift from lifelong education to lifelong learning was not only semantic but also substantive. Lifelong education in the early seventies was associated with the more comprehensive and integrated goal of developing more humane individuals and communities in the face of rapid social change. On the other hand, the more dominant interpretation of lifelong learning in the nineties was linked to retraining and learning new skills that would enable individuals to cope with the demands of the rapidly changing workplace (Matheson and Matheson, 1996; Bagnall, 2000).

It also seems that lifelong learning as it is presently promoted has become more individual-oriented whereas lifelong education often referred back to the community. The emphasis of lifelong learning on the learner could also be interpreted as assigning more agency to individuals in contrast to lifelong education´s thrust on structures and institutions. The crisis within welfare states brought about by massive unemployment has been pointed to as the main reason for the resucitation and subsequent transformation of the concept of lifelong learning (Griffin,1999). By promoting individual agency in determining the learning agenda, the welfare state tries to abdicate its responsibility to provide economic opportunities.

As the term lifelong learning continues to gain wide acceptance, it is crucial to study how this term has evolved historically. As many educators and writers have pointed out, learning throughout life is not a modern idea. African, Asian and Arabic cultures have all emphasized vertical articulation, or the need for people to learn continuously from childhood to adulthood, as individuals and societies change. Present

discourses on lifelong learning have expanded its coverage to include horizontal integration, recognizing that there are more than just schools that deal with education. By highlighting economic concerns, however, the dominant discourse on lifelong learning offers a fragmented and narrow appreciation of women and men's roles in societies. In Europe, where there were record numbers of unemployed in the nineties, lifelong learning was reintroduced to mean mere retraining.

More recently, this vocational orientation has slowly been balanced by the introduction of citizenship education. Ranson (1998) writes of the importance of a society where the processes of learning are tied to active participation in the community and in wealth creation. It is learning for life through active participation in social life itself throughout the lifetime of the learner. The challenge facing policy makers, educators and practitioners is to reconstruct lifelong learning to allow it to encompass political, social and cultural aspects.

Lifelong education, as it was conceived almost thirty years ago, could certainly offer many valuable clues, among them the need to re-examine the early foundations for learning, the transitional processes and pathways from one level and type of education to another (e.g., from basic to tertiary/higher education, from school to work, from formal to non-formal), and the roles and responsibilities of all partners.

But perhaps a more basic question to ask is: What kind of life and world are we learning for?

Learning for What Kind of Life and World?

Life can only be understood backwards. In the meantime, it has to be lived forwards.

– Søren Kierkegaard

To say that people learn throughout life is to state the obvious. We learn every day and we do it more or less intensively. Sometimes we do it deliberately, sometimes learning processes are unintended; very of-

ten they are unavoidable. To live a life without continuous learning is unthinkable. Even the organization of our daily routines involves constant learning. In fact we learn much more and more often than we know. Less obvious is the supposition that lifelong learning could be promoted or somehow organized, a thesis which is often put forward implicitly in praise of lifelong learning as a promising concept for educational politics and policies.

Strangely enough, it seems as if an intense and creative debate among educators and promoters of lifelong learning about concepts of life itself has not found a vitally interested audience so far, nor a relevant floor or forum, especially not in an international setting or from a global perspective. Without any pretension to answering the question "What is life?" comprehensively, some preliminary and provisional thoughts on this topic might be useful nevertheless.

Everyone has to live a life. But notions of how to live it in an "appropriate" way are certainly subject to socially constructed perceptions, traditions and conventions. Here the values that underpin definitions of success and failure in life come in. Models of a "good life" might exist in all societies. Unfortunately (or fortunately) such models, often supported by traditions and religion, tend to erode in the face of modernization. Contemporary societies offer less security and more exposure to different dangers for individuals than in the past, as Ulrich Beck points out in *Risk Society* (1994). Such uncertainty, on the other hand, creates spaces for change in the way that the good or successful life is defined. Today, biographies of individuals are less predetermined and are thus more open to change than ever before. Modern "patchwork biographies" are the result of such openness. At the same time, the indeterminate character of life assigns burden on the individual to make decisions about what to do and how to live.

Lifelong learning is closely tied to the challenge of openess and change the modern individual must face in his/her lifetime.

Lifelong learning encompasses both continuity (stability) and discontinuity (change) in learned capacities over time as a result of interactions with the man-made environment—culture. Learning experiences at different stages of life are interconnected and early life learning

have implications for later life learning. Learning experiences and wisdom acquired in later life also have implications for younger generations to follow. To understand human learning, it is necessary to look into the learner's past experiences, his/her self-image, the attitudes and values that dominate his/her society, and his/her present life situation. In this sense, the multi-disciplinary science of lifespan development may be considered as an important partner discipline for the field of lifelong learning.

Below are five hypotheses on the connection between life and learning.

1) **Lifelong learning and universality.** Despite cultural differences it seems obvious that human beings all over the world live a life in which and for which learning represents a meaningful if not indispensable activity. The target group for educationalists would be the entirety of humanity. This creates an enormous space where content and pedagogy can be developed, discussed and promoted.

2) **Lifelong learning—a "safe label".** It is difficult to find arguments against lifelong learning. Those who are not yet convinced about its relevance and importance could be considered ignorant since they still think that learning is merely a kind of preparatory activity for "(young) people-in-the-making On the contrary, life is something that can and should be designed appropriately. Lifelong Learning will help to optimize your life!

3) **Lifelong learning—the panácea to all problems.** Lifelong Learning can easily be offered as an appropriate remedy for practically every thinkable crisis people are faced with on both the macro and the micro level, be it poverty (by helping improve economic conditions through programmes that introduce saving and lending systems such as those in Bangladesh), war (through peace education such as in Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Colombia) or sickness (through health education ranging from safe water provision to safe sexual behaviour).

4) **Life as a problem in itself.** Modernity is chracterized by increasing complexity, on the one hand, and decreasing confidence in traditional knowledge and values, on the other. Consequently, life courses are no

longer pre-formatted but are more open to promising but at the same time problematic shifts. Risks lurk in abundance behind every corner. Learning is needed to deal with risks effectively.

5) **Lifelong learning and lifelong education**. Learning is more process-oriented than product-oriented. More learning needs more time. The total amount of time devoted to learning over a lifespan, as well as the amount of time spent in learning activities parallel to everyday life, is increasing. Learning for life and learning over the lifespan are thus liberated from a narrow utilitarian perspective.

Who is a Lifelong Learner?

The infant is equipped with sensory capacities which enable him or her to explore and learn about his or her social and physical surroundings (Durkin, 1995, p.57).

Reasoning, problem-solving and wisdom, which rely heavily on accumulated expert knowledge, remain stable or may actually increase into advanced age (Baltes and Smith, 1990, p. 199, as cited in Bandura).

[I]n the African villages people of the same ethnic group pass through rituals and become older by receiving education, assuming social roles associated with marriages and procreation, and by going through a variety of national or localized rituals (Aguilar, 1998, p.17).

[T]he adult with a capacity for true maturity is one who has grown out of childhood without losing childhood's best traits. He has retained the basic emotional strengths of infancy, the stubborn autonomy of toddlerhood, the capacity for wonder and pleasure and playfulness of the pre-school years, and the idealism and passion of adolescence. He has incorporated these into a new pattern of simplicity dominated by adult stability, wisdom, knowledge, sensitivity to other people, responsibility, strength and purposiveness (Stone and Church, 1973, p. 499).

A range of assumptions on the individual as learner has evolved through time. There is the notion that the more the learner has ac-

quired information, the more he/she is a qualified learner. There is the portrayal of the learner as *uncritical* in acquiring and accepting knowledge, conventional ideas and values. This is related to the authoritarian approach, which looks at the learner as a *passive agent* being treated as someone *without any choice* in what and how to learn, and therefore, should be lectured, taught and disciplined. This attitude underestimates the learner's self-capacity to learn and to create. Finally, there is also *fatalism* in learning, the belief that learning takes place at the mercy of our hereditary make-up and our past bad experiences and hang-ups, and only within the limits of our cultural boundaries.

In this section, we propose a different constellation of characteristics of the lifelong learner.

The learner as an active and creative explorer of the world

The learner does not simply respond mechanically to environmental stimuli/events. He/she is an *active explorer* and *creator*. His/her interaction with the environment is informed by his/her hypotheses, perceptions, aspirations, values, attitudes, cognitive styles, etc. The learner can also anticipate future developments, test hypotheses and create. Learning is an interplay between the learner and his/her learning environments. Very early in life newborn babies can, for example, pay selective attention to different environmental stimuli (e.g., mother or objects). Even before the acquisition of language, very young infants can already think and solve problems. For example, the newborn soon learns that crying can become an instrumental means to receive the mother's help to release his/her from hunger or discomfort. These scientific findings confirm that almost from birth the learner is quite intelligent and manifests the capacity and desire to actively explore and make sense of his/her learning environments.

The learner as a reflexive agent

Learning facilitates a process which enables the learner to reflect on his/her life and environment. From the point of view of a provider

of learning opportunities, learning materials and events must be organized so as to help the learner learn how he/she learns. The learner's reflexivity cannot be sufficiently guaranteed by external learning resources or teachers and mentors alone. Lifelong learning needs to aim at building this competency through the eyes of the learner. Research on long-term memories generally suggest that meaningful memories, in which the learner understands its logic and associations, are retained and retrieved better than short-term and rote memories.

Another way to promote learner reflexivity is to encourage his/her own active engagement in problems. The learner needs to self-question and critically analyze learning processes and results. Learner comprehension and self-management of learning processes and results are two important bases for the development of self-reflexivity.

The learner as a self-actualizing agent

Motivation is *intrinsic* when a person studies because it is enjoyable and important in itself. Motivation is *extrinsic* when learning depends on rewards external to the action itself. The learner can be motivated to satisfy primary needs (e.g., food, water, shelter) but once these primary needs are fulfilled, he/she is motivated to fulfill secondary needs (e.g., social approval, competence, literacy, etc.). Many human behaviours are motivated intrinsically. Self-actualization (or fulfilling one's potential as an individual), curiosity, and exploration are lifelong drivers of human action.

The learner as an integrator of learning

The challenge for the lifelong learner is the so-called integration of thinking, feeling and action. We know that information analysis (cognition) motivates us to act. In recent years, the notion of multiple intelligences which encompasses "emotional" intelligence is drawing more and more attention. Goleman (1995) suggests that emotional intelligence encompasses self-awareness and impulse control, persistence, zeal and self-motivation, empathy, and social deftness. For example, we know that exercise is essential to fitness and health. But although

many people acknowledge this, most of us cannot sustain regular exercise, perhaps because our cognitive understanding of it is insufficient. We need to put our thought into action and feel the effects of exercise directly on our bodies. It is therefore important to integrate our thinking, feeling and action.

Another aspect of integration involves managing learning opportunities, taking advantage of all the different learning settings, whether in-school or out-of-school, formal or informal, and across a wide range of learning content.

Given the above characteristics of a lifelong learner, the stakeholders in the educational field face the following challenges.

Lifelong learning as optimizing individual differences in learning

These common patterns or rhythms should not and cannot disguise the other central fact about lifespan development, namely that there are individual difference in timing and pathways (Bee, 1998, p. 538).

Debate over how much our behaviour in general is shaped by hereditary (nature) or environmental (nurture) factors leads to the conclusion that the two interact, with neither having primacy. The more important question then is how our negative habits or behaviour can be unlearned or corrected through lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning helps the individual learner to reduce the burdens of hereditary "handicaps". A bad-tempered child needs to learn and train himself/herself, over an extended period of time, to control his/her temper and channel his/her energy into constructive professional and social activities. Lifelong learning is a key to our dealing with our past experiences and can diminish the effect of hereditary factors that influence learning negatively.

It is important for us to learn not to make hasty and negative conclusions or judgements about so-called "pathological" behaviour or disabilities. People who exhibit such behavior or have some sort of

disability should not be labelled "abnormal", lacking in certain learning skills. Lifelong learning should be inclusive, aiming at developing understanding and sensitivity, so that the learners can live together with these disadvantaged people and attend to their needs, difficulties and aspirations. At the same time, one should consider that these disadvantaged people have special abilities of their own.

Lifelong learning as a continuity of learning experiences

- *We want to try to describe the kind of maturity that represents a culmination, rather than a downgrade, in which curiosity and the capacity to learn continue undiminished and even grow long after the body's tissues have begun to fall* (Stone and Church, 1973, p. 491).

The concept of continuity of learning experiences is a major area of human development research. Research findings in this area generally suggest that if you were an active learner when you were young, you will stay that way when you are older.

Although learned behaviour and attitudes can change, these also maintain continuity, e.g., the use of the mother tongue, choice of food, value systems, etc. We also try to choose environments that fit our characteristics. We choose jobs that match our skills and personality. These facts indicate that our past learning influences our present and future learning.

Yet discontinuity of learning safeguards our creativity and our ability to adjust to our changing environment. Learning provides opportunities to individuals to develop the capacity to integrate new experiences and adapt to new situations. We seek to learn because learning enables us to change, sustain and improve our skills, knowledge and attitudes across the lifespan. Change involves self-growth, self-actualization, the development of self-efficacy, skill development, knowledge acquisition, and creativity development. And not only children change but adults change as well. Indeed, it is impossible to imagine that adults do not change over 30 to 40 years?

Lifelong culture-learning

Culture shapes the way we see the world. It therefore has the capacity to bring about the change of attitudes needed to ensure peace and sustainable development, which, we know, form the only possible way forward for life on Planet Earth. (...) When we speak about culture, we are looking at ways of living as individuals and ways of living together. A 'living culture' is one which—almost by definition—interacts with others, in that it involves people creating, blending, borrowing and reinventing meanings with which they can identify. Frederico Mayor, Preface, World Culture Report 1998, UNESCO

Lifelong learning should place the individual's learning about his/her own culture and other cultures in the continuum of the individual's learning throughout the lifespan. To achieve this goal, conscious effort by lifelong educators is needed to simultaneously understand the process of learning one's own culture and those processes involved in learning about the diversity of other cultures, and to identify both inhibiting and facilitating factors. So-called home culture learning and learning cultural diversity cannot be treated as separate issues.

Although learning about different cultures is not a new task, it has not been systematically organized. Management programmes in this area are a rarity. Culture needs to be learned more consciously as part of our lifelong learning. Learning and teaching consciously one's own culture comparatively with other cultures is a useful endeavor. When a person who is brought up in one culture confronts an unfamiliar culture and people, how does that person react? What learning processes are involved? What is the role of learning in anticipating and reducing culture shock in this global village? What is the role of language in understanding one's culture and those of others? What are the advantages and difficulties of multi-lingual learning? How do we develop our positive and negative attitudes toward unfamiliar people? What is the role of learning in combating racial stereotyping and prejudices? In reducing inter-cultural conflicts? In discouraging extreme rightist movements? In changing a culture of dependency observed in developmental work? The lifelong learner needs to address these questions.

20

Understanding Learning Environments and Their Contributions to Lifelong Learning

Learning is both an individual and a social process. While learning takes place at the individual level with the interplay of cognitive, emotional and physical elements, the learning process is very much shaped by the environment in which the learner finds himself/herself. Learning environments are not static and constantly pose new challenges to the learner. The learner needs to assimilate and accommodate the changes in his/her environment.

Under what conditions do children learn? What kind of incentives will be favorable to acquiring new skills for workers? How does poverty obstruct learning? Will an education policy promoting equal access for girls and boys redress the existing gender gap? These questions all concern the environments for learning, yet for many educators the different layers of environments can be so overwhelming that unpacking them is never a priority. It is therefore common to see discussions limited only to the school environment or the family environment or the policy environment or the physical environment.

This section proposes that learning environments may be analyzed at three levels: the micro, the meso and the macro. The micro refers to the environment closest to the learner—tha family. The meso refers to the school, the community, and the workplace. The macro refers to the societal, national and global contexts. While it is clear that these levels interact with each other to produce a specific effect on learners, it is important to look closely at each level and distinguish what each contributes to the learner and the learning process.

The very early foundations of human learning are formed during the prenatal period. Scientists say that about three weeks after conception, the brain forms into a large mass of neurons. How the mother arranges her prenatal environments during this period therefore affects the course of development of the fetus. It has been observed that unsafe use of drugs, smoking and drinking alcohol can cause birth

effects and other long-term harmful effects.

The *family* environment is critical to providing a foundation for the culture of learning. The values of the family vis-a-vis learning is key in ensuring that the base for lifelong learning is established. In traditional societies, families played a key role in the education of children. This critical role is being diminished now as many families, for various reasons, shift this responsibility to the school and the media. When both parents are working or when there is only a single parent who needs to work to support the child, the time factor prevents a relaxed atmosphere for learning. Working parents often see education and learning as secondary to providing food, clothing and shelter. There is also that common thinking that education today is so highly modernized and specialized that parents themselves need to undergo special education. Evidence of this is the growing stock of books advising parents on ways to facilitate the learning process of their children.

The *school* environment is critical in laying the foundations for basic learning skills, such as learning to learn, positive attitudes toward learning, and striving for competency and excellence, as attitudes and competencies acquired by the learner can persist long into the future and continue to motivate (or demotivate!) sustainable learning throughout the lifespan. Unfortunately for many schools all over the world scarce resources allotted to education and/or misuse of funds prevent educators and administrators from building school environments conducive to learning. Not only are teachers poorly paid but infrastructure is sadly lacking or is in a state of decay. The physical, social and cultural environments provided by the school are all interlinked in either facilitating or obstructing learning.

Learners think and feel in different ways at different stages of life. The child learner is egocentric not because he/she is always occupied with thoughts of self but precisely because he/she is busy trying to establish self-identity, and during this process is not sufficiently capable of distinguishing his/her own affairs from those of others (Stone and Church, 1973). As part of the learning environment, the *teacher* needs to understand and guide his/her learners through these developmental stages—from egocentrism to maturity, from an ethnocen-

tric view of cultures to a wider, more relativistic view. The training most teachers receive, however, does not prepare them for such complex tasks. Furthermore, the authoritarian relationship between teacher and student continues to shape the classroom environment where fear-based approaches hinder rather than facilitate learning.

The *community* is another key element in the learning environment. Here we are not talking only about community members but also about other facilities/centers for learning. The more diverse learning opportunities there are in a community, the richer is the environment for learning. Public libraries and community learning centers not only enhance and complement school facilities but also provide venues for learning to other sectors of the community that do not have access to schools. An important issue in this regard is how lifelong learning can promote learning in groups. Even as self-directed learning is a key element of lifelong learning, it should not exclude the possibility of group learning approaches in promoting understanding of the self.

Finally, at the *global* level, one could consider how this rapidly globalizing and information-intensive world is shaping the learning process and the learning opportunities of individuals, communities and societies. Our acquired knowledge needs to be constantly validated and updated against the demands of the rapidly changing social environment. Learner efforts and needs to continue to learn must be supported and facilitated by educational/learning environments conducive to lifelong learning. The improvement in the learning environments enables the learner to continue to expand the skills and positive attitudes acquired during the basic education period.

The interface of information and communication technology (ICT) and traditional knowledge is also important to consider. The introduction of ICT both as a learning environment and a means for learning has transformed traditional notions of learning. The use of ICT and its impact on active learning styles in information-seeking, analysis, synthesis, interactive and horizontal communication, and the self-production of images—all of which go beyond familiar learning environments—have to be examined.

Towards Lifelong Inter-cultural Learning

In its 1974 General Conference, UNESCO adopted a Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which emphasized knowledge and respect for different cultures as an essential part of international understanding. Its paragraph No 17 concerning "cultural aspects" claims that, "Member States should promote, at various stages and in various types of education, study of different cultures, their reciprocal influences, their perspectives and ways of life, in order to encourage mutual appreciation of the differences between them." These recommendations legitimate our challenge to organize educational programmes to study cultural influences and interactions between different cultures (International Yearbook of Education, IBE/UNESCO, 1994, p. 54).

For nearly fifty years, since the adoption of the United Nations Charter (1945) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations and its specialized agencies have put forward many conventions, declarations, recommendations, and resolutions concerning international understanding and related areas such as human rights, peace, fundamental freedoms, etc. Although major world wars have not occurred since World War II, the international community has witnessed numerous regional armed conflicts, ethnic cleansing, violent crimes, vandalism, xenophobia, bullying, etc. Despite rapid advances in science and technology, we are far behind in learning how to manage our man-made environments, our "cultures".

Given these circumstances, we advocate a learner-focused approach to promoting cultural understanding of the individual learner that would go beyond those traditional learning programmes directed primarily at building awareness of slogans and of the goals of international/ cultural understanding.

Understanding the cognitive continuity of culture learning of the learner

It is critical to understand the cognitive continuity of our cultural learning. Man's image of himself/herself, perforce, is not independent of his/her image of the world (Bruner, 1962). What does this mean in terms of our tasks for cultural learning? This implies that the learner's attitudes toward a certain culture are affected by at least two factors—the cultural environments in which the learner lives and the learner-created image of that culture. We tend to perceive other cultures using our own cultural frame of reference. For example, societies constantly being exposed to violence and conflict tend to produce children and adults who perceive the world as full of hostility and hate.

Thus the first barrier to understanding cultural diversity lies in ourselves, our own culturally-coloured perception and understanding of different cultural practices. Culture shapes the learner, who also shapes culture. This reciprocal shaping process occurs throughout the lifespan, whether the learner wants it or not. The shaping power of cultures over the individual's life often goes unnoticed. Learning one's own culture tends to be taken for granted. This is because cultural influence, whether through symbols (language, ideas, etc) or through non-verbal means (touching, tasting, using gestures, etc) becomes so much a part of our daily existence that we are no longer conscious of it.

Learning to acquire a lifelong capacity for understanding the "positives" and "negatives" of culture

When we have learned to open our hearts and listen and watch the world with sensitivity and enthusiasm, cultures are beautifully filled with heart-moving music, poems, art, great philosophical insights, scientific and technological inventions, passionate love stories, dreams, adventures, humanitarian and philantrophical acts, and so on. Life can indeed become so exciting, so meaningful, and so enjoyable.

But our history also reminds us of the dark side of our cultures, which can become so ugly, cruel, destructive, selfish, and violent. History bears witness to the fact that when nationalistic or fascistic sentiments grow so strong within a nation, extreme ethnocentrism—the belief in the absolute superiority of one's culture over the cultures of others—prevails. Culture is not value-free; it creates negative as well as positive emotions and values.

Who teaches the individual learner how to cope with the both negative and positive events in life? Teachers, parents or friends? As we live in an extremely stressfull, achievement-oriented, competitive and information-intensive society, it is more and more difficult for us to learn from each other's experiences, to learn about the constructive as well as the destructive side of our cultures. Our schooling is predominantly cognitive—math, computer, engineering, etc. Seldom does the formal school curriculum or our parents teach understanding and tolerance of all peoples, cultures, values, and ways of life. Learners who excel at cognitive tasks can sometimes be naive or frail learners when it comes to life issues and problems.

The continuous nature of the cultural influence over a wide range of our life events and activities cautions us that the individual should be equipped with a buffer system to constantly evaluate the impact of culture on our lives. Such a protective mechanism must be in operation at all times, encompassing our different stages of life, different types of activities, and different relationships, both positive and negative. The learner can learn from both, which is why continued cultivation of our critical mind through learning throughout the lifespan is extremely important!

The individual learner's capacity-building to learn both the negatives and positives of life events must be reactive as well as pro-active. Through the reactive function of lifelong learning, the learner learns, just as our society learns lessons from history, why we make our mistakes. The pro-active function of lifelong learning enables the learner to predict difficult and problematic situations and to cope with them when they occur. Learning to know ourselves, especially about our past, is important. Understanding the past is often the stepping stone to the understanding of the future.

It is equally important for the learner to develop competencies to bring about needed cultural changes, and, if these competencies are properly empowered and nurtured by learning, the learner can shape his/her culture—its political system, institutions, knowledge. But one must remember that our so-called "cultural frames of reference", which are the results of our conformity to the social norms and standards prevalent in our culture, are learned. In this sense, most cultures are permeated by conservatism and rely on traditions and precedent. Familiar ways of life are easier and more comfortable than new and unfamiliar ones.

In breaking the cycle of cultural conservatism and misunderstanding, it is important to develop and push forward innovative ideas and social reform. This requires the courage and will to improve our learned capacities to penetrate our society with the idea that we can change, innovate and mature.

Learning and cultural diversity: from cultural assimilation to cultural learning

The beauty of an ideal multi-cultural society is its emphasis on finding the best cultural place for every member of that society. This is in sharp contrast to the assimilationist view which dictates that "members of divergent cultural groups should discard their cultural heritage culture and take on the culture of the majority group" (Moghaddam, et al, 1993).

Culture learning starts with the assumption that there is no hierarchy of cultures and that the challenge to individuals, communities and societies is the persistent and lifelong negotiation of multicultural values and cultural treasures. All cultures have something valuable to offer to other cultures, and it is up to the individual to adopt or not to adopt the cultural practices, values and attitudes different from his/her culture. Advocating cultural tolerance may not be sufficient. Culture learning can become a more pleasurable and insightful activity for those who seek flexibility, creativity and openness to human experi-

ences. In this sense, cultural differences can be exploited as a means to promote lifelong learning—the appreciation for the treasures of culture as well as alternative ways of life, values and actions.

Given the above, one could look at the following strategies that may help facilitate learning effective cultural exchange and interactions.

1) Starting from the formative years, the learner needs to be exposed to diverse cultural information and experiences. The use of the multimedia approach in providing information for culture learning programmes should be maximized. Avoid providing superficial, stereotypical, or misleading information. This means encouraging the comparative study of one's own culture and that of others, starting from the formative years.

2) Combine foreign language learning programmes with culture learning. Explain how language shapes our thinking and attitudes. Multilingual learning, if properly organized, will not produce culturally confused children. Instead it can be a useful form of learning as children master two languages simultaneously. Try to learn at least one, preferably two languages other than one's own.

3) Develop culture learning programmes in which culture relativity is a main theme. Its intended outcomes are to provide learning opportunities to develop self awareness about one's culture, on the one hand, and to promote a relativistic view that recognizes that values, attitudes and behaviours are culture bound and that our own cultural models are not absolute, on the other. For example, one could design a "culture-in-contact" learning programme based on information and materials collected from the various sojourn experiences of two individuals interacting with one another in diverse cultural contexts. Through the culture-in-contact simulation materials, the learners will develop their cognitive, affective and interpersonal skills in coping with cultural diversity

4) Develop learning indicators for the individual learner's cross-cultural competencies, among them the ability to examine one's culture from a relativistic point of view; the ability to review one's cultural

weaknesses and strengths objectively and historically; the ability to possess a sensitive and empathetic view of cultural differences; and the ability to communicate cross-culturally (through proficiency in at least one or two foreign languages).

Lifelong Learning: a Problem, a Project or a Prospect?

Discussions of lifelong learning seldom address directly existential themes—the meaning of life, self, birth, growing-up, friendship, love, courtship, sexuality, loneliness, violence, hate, death—that are at the core of every individual's life. We advocate that lifelong learning address these themes so as to appeal not only to economic, occupational and practical needs but also to create opportunities for reflection and dialogue that would help individuals of all age groups to effectively cope with life. Lifelong learning should appeal to the totality of a person—heart, body and brain—and more importantly to our existential values and emotions.

Lifelong learning can also deal with the *uncertainty* and *contradictions* of life. Life offers potential as well as risk. Life can be both competitive and co-operative. A major question in lifelong learning in this respect is what types of early and youth developmental tasks and of educational interventions can foster the individual learner's capacity to tackle unpredictability, uncertainty, irrationality, and contradictions of life experiences.

An infant needs a guardian's protection and love. The preschool child needs recognition and encouragement from teachers and caretakers of his/her language development. As Erikson explains, "basic trust" originates in a child-mother relationship that is characterized by warm, emotional and trustful contact and communication. This implies that lifelong learning to cope with life uncertainty should start early in life. But it is also true that one's ability to cope with uncertainty continues to develop throughout life. Different life stages and life issues require a diverse coping strategies. Are our lifelong learning programmes ready and well-equipped for this task?

Life is often contradictory. We advocate, on the one hand, that we be caring, loving and compassionate. But history also tells us that we can be cruel, hateful and destructive. A history healing intergenerational programme being organized in some schools in Hamburg (see Ohsako & Crammer, 1999) bears witness to this fact. The Holocaust is a dark fact of history—a most cruel act committed by humans against humans. The history healing intergenerational dialogue and learning between young Germans and the former Jewish residents who fled from Hamburg during the Nazi period appeals to the need for true understanding and dialogue between the victims/their family members and the younger generations who have had no experiences of war, to the need to develop spontaneous and truly empathetic feelings in the young people for the pain and suffering experienced by the victims, and finally to the need to care for and guide the next generation. Intergenerational learning, which is a part of lifelong education, has potential applications in the broad areas of peace education, experiential history teaching and learning, and conflict resolution.

We can also become fixated with material things—money, expensive cars, jewelries, clothes, etc. Some people can never seem to be completely satisfied with their material possessions—he/she always wants more. Simplifying life is another popular scheme. There is growing clamor for a higher quality of life, i.e., one filled with satisfactory family and social relations, the time to reflect and wonder, and opportunities for creativity, tranquillity and solitude. How can lifelong learning promote our pursuit of happiness, no matter how fleeting it may be, in this technological and stressfull world? What makes people happy or unhappy is ever a challenging question for lifelong learning.

Lastly, lifelong learning is not value-free. Let's remember that there are billions of people who suffer from poverty, physical handicaps, wars, discrimination and exclusion, epidemic diseases, etc. These people are often forgotten by people living in affluent societies and having an individualistic life style. The misery of these people is sometimes suppressed in our memory system because it is painful and it arouses feelings of guilt. Lifelong learning needs to courageously address both the positive and negative aspects of life. We learn from both good and bad

experiences. However, understanding the positive and negative sides of life is not sufficient. Lifelong learning should aim to promote the art of human maturity—a prerequisite to becoming a good citizen, actively involved in local, national and international issues and problems.

On a final note, it is good to remember what the early writers dreamed of as they examined the importance of lifelong learning:

> If learning involves all of one's life, in the sense of both timespan and diversity, and all of society, including its social and economic as well as its educational resources, then we must go even further than the necessary overhaul of 'educational systems' until we reach the stage of a learning society" (Preamble, xxxiii, Faure).

Bibliography

Aguilar, Mario (1998). "Gerontocratic, Aesthetic and Political Models of Age" in (ed.) Mario Aguilar, *The Politics of Age and Gerontocracy in Afrcia*. Eritrea: Africa World Press.

Angelou, Maya. (1993). "History, despite its wrenching pain, Cannot be unlived, and if faced with courage, need not be lived again." Presidential Inaugural Poem, January 20.

Bagnall, Richard (2000). "Lifelong Learning and the Limitations of Economic Determinism." *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 19, No.1.

Bandura, Albert (1997). *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York, USA: W.H. Freeman.

Beck, Ulrich (1990). *The Risk Society*.

Bee, Helen (1998). *Lifespan Development*. New York: Addison-Wesley.

Bruner, Jerome (1962). *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand*.

Dave, R.H. (1976). *Foundations of Lifelong Education*. UNESCO Institute for Education.

Delors, Jacques, et al. (1996). *Learning: The Treasure Within*. UNESCO: Paris.

Durkin, Kevin (1995). *Developmental Social Psychology: From Infancy to Old Age*. Cambridge, USA: Blackwell Publishers.

Faure, Edgar, et a.l (1972). Learning to Be. UNESCO, Paris.

Gelpi, Ettore (1980). "Politics and Lifelong Education Policies and Practices" in (ed.) A.J. Cropley, *Towards a System of Lifelong Education*. UNESCO Institute for Education.

Griffin, Colin (1999). "Lifelong Learning and Social Democracy." *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 18, No. 5.

Goleman, Daniel (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam.

Lorenz, Konrad (1963). *On Aggression*. New York: Bantam.

Matheson, David and Catherine Matheson (1996). "Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Education: A Critique." *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, Vol.1, No2.

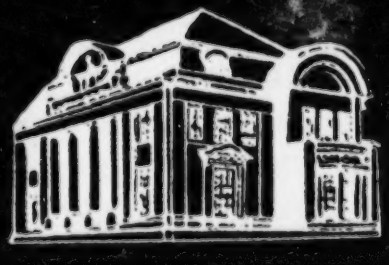
Moghaddam, F., et al. (1993). *Social Psychology in Cross Cultural Perspectives*. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company.

Ohsako, Toshio (1994). "Policy Goals and Objectives in Cultural Education" in (ed.) L. Dubbeldam, *International Yearbook of Education*, Vol. XLIV p.53-78. UNESCO, International Bureau of Education.

_____and Cramer, M.(1999). Intergenerational Dialogue and Mutual Learning Between German Pupils and Jewish Seniors, Education and Ageing, Vol. 14, No. 3, Triangle Journals Ltd, Oxford.

Ranson, Stewart (1998). *Inside the Learning Society*. London: Casell.

Stone. L. Joseph and Joseph Church (1973). *Childhood and Adolescence: A Psychology of the Growing Person*. New York: Random House.



34

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

CE082162

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: REVISITING LIFELONG LEARNING FOR THE 21st CENTURY

Author(s): C. HEDEL-AÑONUEVO, T. OHSAKO, W. MAUCH

Corporate Source: UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION

Publication Date: 2001

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

[X]

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

[ ]

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

[ ]

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: C. A. McIntosh	Printed Name/Position/Title: Dr. Christopher McIntosh, Head of Publications, Executive Editor IRE
Organization/Address: UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION, FELDBRUNNENSTR. 58, 20148 HAMBURG, GERMANY	Telephone: (+4940) 44804121 FAX: (+4940) 41077 23
	E-Mail Address: c.mcintosh@unesco.org Date: 29.10.01

(over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

Cheryl Grossman
Processing Coordinator
ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education
Center on Education and Training for Employment
1900 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1090

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: info@ericfac.piccard.csc.com
WWW: http://ericfacility.org